

COURIER-JOURNAL

Southern Tier-Auburn Geneva

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Workshop: How Can Parish Aid Family?

By Martin Toombs
Southern Tier Editor

Elmira Heights — Parish programs to support families in this "Year of the Family," were the subject of a workshop at St. Charles Borromeo March 9.

The workshop, sponsored by the Chemung-Schuyler Family Enrichment Committee, featured Frank Staropoli of the diocesan Family Life Office, who spoke on why parishes should be active in family ministry, and how they can do it.

The 40 persons attending also heard a description of the work of one parish Family Life Committee and of the programs available through the Family Support Program sponsored by Elmira City Records Court.

Discussing why family programs are important for parishes, Staropoli noted that the Church's understanding of the family has changed. He noted that once "Church" was

seen as the hierarchy in Rome, but now it is identified with national and diocesan groups as well. And then Vatican II reaffirmed that the family contains all the elements of the Church. "The Church happens in your home," he said, which is an important "message for all of us to know."

"Family was and is the last link in making the Roman Catholic Church a reality, he said.

With that understanding comes the concept that parishes should concentrate on helping families, who will in turn support individuals. For that reason, he noted, he doesn't like the expression "parish family" which downplays the family unit.

To support his point, he described the results of a study done to determine what factors in children's lives most affect their faith as adults. The top three factors were first, the faith of the father; second the relationship

between the mother and father, and third, the faith of the mother.

Those top three, he pointed out, have "nothing to do with the institutional Church."

That has been recognized by religious educators, he commented, who have been working in recent years to get parents involved in their children's religious education.

Discussing programs, Staropoli listed types of parish organizations that could help form family programs, and several kinds of programs that can be conducted. He invited participants to examine the four tables of material on display at the session for more ideas.

John Watts of St. Mary Our Mother, Horseheads, described the efforts of that parish's Family Life Committee, noting its problems in attracting membership and participation in programs they sponsored. The experience taught them to lower their sights, he said, and members are now working on programs on a smaller scale but which the committee feels will be beneficial to those involved.

And Lauren Schweizer described her work as part of the Family Life Program sponsored by Elmira City Records Court and Judge John Frawley. She distributed a brochure on the communication and family interaction programs that are available, and enlisted support from among the group for some of her efforts.

She and Frawley also described the Family Time program that is being proposed for the community. The program would involve sponsorship by many community, religious and industrial groups, and is designed to encourage families to set aside time each week for the family to do something as a unit.

Couple To Speak At Seminar

Elmira — Rev. Dodd Lambertson, pastor of Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, and his wife Myrna will introduce the "Couple Communication Program" at the monthly alcoholism seminar in St. Joseph's Hospital's Doctors Meeting Room Thursday, March 20 at 12:15 p.m.

Mrs. Lambertson is a graduate of the Johnson Institute, Chemical Dependency Training Workshop. Rev. Lambertson was hospital chaplain at North Memorial Medical Center in Minneapolis, Minnesota, and has special training in family systems and chemical dependency.

Further information may be obtained from the Social Work-STARs office at St. Joseph's, 733-5519.



Sister Barbara Brennan of St. Mary's House of Prayer addressing the Church Women United's World Day of Prayer Service.

Corning Women Join World in Prayer Day

By Martin Toombs
Southern Tier Editor

Corning — Responsible Freedom was the theme of the prayer service that brought 100 women together for the World Day of Prayer observance at Emanuel Lutheran Church.

The women prayed the service written by women of Thailand, and heard three speakers discuss types of responsibility: that to self, family and society.

The annual, international event is sponsored by Church Women United, as women from around the world pray together on the first Friday of March each year.

The Thai woman who headed the team that wrote the service, Prakai Non-tawasee, has explained the Responsible Freedom theme, noting that when a revolution occurred in her country in

1973, the "Thai" people rejoiced that they had gained true freedom. But chaos quickly followed the October uprising. The crowds shouted, "We have freedom. But there was no freedom."

The first speaker to address the Corning gathering was Rev. Melanie Cole, of the Caton and South Corning Methodist churches. Rev. Cole began her talk by noting that women can be both "sister slaves" and "sisters who are forgiven and free." It is easy for women to lose their identity, she said, by becoming complacent. If that happens, she said, "outside forces creep in and we become slaves."

An example of that, she noted, would be the attitude toward voting that "whatever the popular opinion is, I'll go for it." Those accepting that view "become slaves," she said.

Dr. Gilbert Sweet of

Corning Community College discussed responsibility to family, noting that if freedom means doing anything you want without negative results, "it isn't possible in the family as we know it."

Sweet emphasized the need for good parenting skills, and for understandings of the processes used in dealing with children. He explained that children are more apt to remember how their parents reached decisions than what the decisions were.

Sister Barbara Brennan of St. Mary's House of Prayer discussed responsibility toward society, noting that people should "seek the truth of God's will and society will benefit."

She commented that "to speak the truth of Jesus in society today" means rejection, as society does not accept that truth. "We are living in a pagan society that should be Christian," she said.

Health Planning Supported

By Martin Toombs
Southern Tier Editor

Corning — Speaking to health planners, Stanley Lundine, representative from the 39th congressional district, called for further efforts in health planning and cooperation among health care institutions.

Addressing the annual meeting of the Southern Tier Subarea Council of the Finger Lakes Health Systems Agency (FLHSA) at the Hilton Inn, Lundine also praised the efforts of those working on the merger of St. James Mercy and Bethesda hospitals in Hornell, expressing his understanding of the problems they face.

Lundine related his first experience with health planning in his first few days as mayor of Jamestown, when a published plan to turn the community hospital into a nursing home brought a protest group to his house. He told them that he would "get the facts" on the issue. But they quickly corrected him, he said, making it plain that the facts had nothing to do with it; they wanted to know which side he was on.

It is "difficult to plan rationally," he said, and addressing the St. James administrator, "believe me, Sister Rene, I know how hard it is."

Commenting that he is glad to see the work toward the hospital merger in Hornell progressing, he noted that he knows "how difficult that process is." He commented that it is "my observation from some distance" that the FLHSA's willingness to let the hospitals do the planning has aided the process. That makes it possible for local people to "do what's best," he observed.

On the same theme, he pointed out that the fiscal problems of the federal government mean that Washington needs suggestions on how to cut spending, not how to increase it. He stated that if health care providers don't make recommendations for better organization and utilization of health care, those changes will be made anyway by persons in government who won't be able to do the job as well.

He noted a few federal health efforts that probably will be renewed soon, in-

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cluding the National Service Corp, which provides medical personnel to underserved areas and is "a worthwhile endeavor."

However, he noted, he does not expect the type of comprehensive national health care proposed by Sen. Edward Kennedy to be approved. As for the less costly catastrophic plan backed by Sen. Russell Long, "I don't think there's even funding for that in the short range," he said.

What is needed, he commented, is Medicare reform, with an emphasis on providing proper levels of care. That would mean more home health care, and coverage of service at lower levels, which, he pointed out, is both less costly and more humane.

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Bishop Clark receives his membership card for the Notre Dame High School Booster Club from Kathleen and Lawrence Muscarella.

Notre Dame Boosters Organizing Club

Elmira — The "Blue and Gold," a Notre Dame High School booster club, is forming with leadership from the Elmira community.

The club, charging \$5 for an individual membership and \$10 for a family membership, will aid the school's athletic program. It lists as goals the promotion of physical fitness, school spirit and pride, and spectator and financial support of Notre Dame athletics.

In a letter to prospective members, Richard D. Nichols, chairman, explained that the

ME Program

Lansing — A Marriage Encounter information night has been scheduled for 7:30 p.m., Sunday, March 23, at Lansing Methodist Church, Brickyard Road for any interested couples.

club will be organized and operated by the membership.

And the club has gotten its first member, Bishop Matthew H. Clark, who received a membership card March 7 from Lawrence and Kathleen Muscarella, the group's treasurer and secretary.

Mrs. Muscarella noted that it "is only fitting" that he be the first member, as "Bishop Clark is a most avid booster of physical fitness and athletics."

"We intend to recognize each athletic team as well as individuals," Muscarella explained. "We are all proud of what Notre Dame has accomplished in the past 25 years, and wish to continue the fine tradition."

A mailing is under way to solicit memberships to the group, which may be contacted through PO Box 3203, Elmira, NY 14905.